

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8150

INFO USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMCONSUL SALVADOR

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MONROVIA 1157

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, LI, PDIP

SUBJECT: VISIT TO MONROVIA OF USN TASK GROUP 21.6

(USS INCHON AND USS SPRUANCE)

REF: 77 MONROVIA 9861

BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: SUMMARY. THE VISIT TO MONROVIA OF
THE USN TASK GROUP 21.6 (USS INCHON AND USS SPRUANCE)
FEBRUARY 9 - 12 WAS RECEIVED ENTHUSIASTICALLY BY THE
GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF LIBERIA WHO FOUND IN IT AN
EXPRESSION OF THOSE TRADITIONAL TIES OF FRIENDSHIP AND
MUTUAL COOPERATION SO HIGHLY VALUED HERE. THE PUBLIC
PERFORMANCES BY THE U.S. NAVY CEREMONIAL BAND, THE U.S.
MARINE DRUM & BUGLE CORPS AND THE COLOR GUARD AND
PARADE UNIT, THE DEMONSTRATION FOR THE ARMED FORCES BY
THE MARINE VERTICAL ASSAULT UNIT AND THE CLOSE-UP VIEW
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OF THESE TWO SHIPS GIVEN TO THOUSANDS OF LIBERIANS ALL
COMBINED TO LEAVE THE COMFORTING IMPRESSION OF AN ALLY
OF GREAT STRENGTH AND GOODWILL. PRESIDENT TOLBERT WAS
CLEARLY DELIGHTED AT THIS OCCASION TO UNDERLINE THE
CLOSENESS OF U.S./GOL RELATIONS, AND THE OPPORTUNITY
TO BE THE GUEST OF HONOR AT A "RETURN CALLERS LUNCHEON"
ABOARD THE INCHON. ALTHOUGH U.S. NAVAL VESSELS VISIT

MONROVIA REGULARLY, (E.G. THE USS JULIUS FURER IN NOVEMBER 1977, REFTTEL) THIS IS THE FIRST VISIT IN ABOUT TEN YEARS WHICH HAS INCLUDED SHORE ACTIVITY OF THE SCOPE AND DRAMA AFFORDED BY TASK GROUP 21.6. GIVEN U.S. INTERESTS IN LIBERIA, THE EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS MORE FREQUENT VISITS BY NAVAL TASK GROUPS OF THIS NATURE TO MONROVIA. END SUMMARY. END
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1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. DURING THE TASK GROUP VISIT, ADMIRAL SAGERHOLM AND PRESIDENT TOLBERT MET TWICE. THE ADMIRAL CALLED ON THE PRESIDENT FEBRUARY 9 AT WHICH TIME THE PRESIDENT TOLD SAGERHOLM THAT HE REGARDED THE TASK GROUP VISIT AS A MANIFESTION OF TRADITIONAL TIES OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN LIBERIA AND THE U.S., AND ASSURED THE ADMIRAL OF A CORDIAL WELCOME FROM THE LIBERIAN PEOPLE. THE ADMIRAL HOSTED PRESIDENT TOLBERT AT A RETURN CALLERS LUNCHEON ABOARD THE USS INCHON FEBRUARY 10. THE LUNCHEON WAS ATTENDED BY THE AMBASSADOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET. THE ADMIRAL ALSO PAID FORMAL CALLS ON DEFENSE MINISTER BURLEIGH HOLDER AND MONROVIA MAYOR EDWARD DAVID. DURING THE MEETING WITH MAYOR DAVID, A U.S. NAVY ENLISTED MAN FROM DAYTON, OHIO, PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR A SOUVENIR BOOK FROM THE MAYOR OF DAYTON, SISTER CITY OF MONROVIA.

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2. GOL HOSPITALITY INCLUDED A LUNCHEON GIVEN BY THE DEFENSE MINISTER FOR THE ADMIRAL AND TASK GROUP OFFICERS FEBRUARY 9 AT THE DUCOR HOTEL ATTENDED BY GOL CABINET MEMBERS AND OFFICIALS OF THE U.S. MISSION. THE ADMIRAL AND TASK GROUP OFFICERS WERE GUESTS OF HONOR AT THE LIBERIAN ARMED FORCES DAY BALL FEBRUARY 11.

3. IN THE ABSENCE OF THE AMBASSADOR (DELAYED BY WEATHER IN NEW YORK), THE CHARGE AND DATT CO-HOSTED A RECEPTION FOR THE TASK GROUP IN THE EMBASSY GARDEN FEBRUARY 9. THE TASK GROUP HELD A RECEPTION ABOARD THE USS INCHON AND USS SPRUANCE FEBRUARY 10 FOR GOL OFFICIALS AND THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS.

4. THE STARS OF THIS VISIT WERE UNQUESTIONABLY THE NAVY CEREMONIAL BAND, THE MARINE DRUM & BUGLE CORPS, THE COMBO AND THE COLOR GUARD AND MARINE PARADE UNIT. THEIR PERFORMANCES WERE MET EVERYWHERE WITH ENTHUSIASM, ADDING AN EXCITEMENT AND GALA ATMOSPHERE TO THE VISIT. THEIR FIRST STOP WAS AT THE EXECUTIVE MANSION IN AN OUTDOOR CONCERT FOR THE PRESIDENT. THE DRUM & BUGLE CORPS' POWERFUL RENDITION OF THE HALLELUJAH CHORUS

FROM "THE MESSIAH" BROUGHT A STRONG EMOTIONAL RESPONSE FROM PRESIDENT TOLBERT. A SPECIAL EFFORT WAS MADE TO BRING THESE TWO SUPERLATIVE UNITS TO THE PEOPLE BY HAVING THEM PERFORM AT FOUR DENSELY-POPULATED MARKET AREAS AROUND THE CITY ON FEBRUARY 9. PACKED CROWDS RESPONDED ENTHUSIASTICALLY AT ALL LOCATIONS. THE BAND PERFORMED IN A DOWNTOWN PARK ON THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY 10. BY THIS TIME ITS FAME HAD SPREAD. ONE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RANKING OFFICIAL, LOOKING WITHOUT SUCCESS FOR HIS SECRETARY, FOUND THE MINISTRY EMPTIED, WITH ASSISTANT MINISTERS, OFFICERS, SECRETARIES AND JANITORS ALL GATHERED IN THE NEARBY PARK AROUND THE BAND. THE CROWNING TRIUMPH FOR THE BAND AND DRUM & BUGLE CORPS CAME THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 10 AT THE

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E.J. ROYE BUILDING AUDITORIUM IN A CONCERT BEFORE A NEAR-CAPACITY CROWD WHICH CHEERED THE SUPERB MUSICIANSHIP AND DISCIPLINE OF THESE TWO UNITS. THE COMBO, DRAWN FROM THE BAND, PERFORMED AT THE EMBASSY RECEPTION AND AT THE ARMED FORCES BALL, RECEIVING THE SAME WARM RESPONSE.

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5. CIVIC ACTION INCLUDED VISITS TO THE SHIPS BY TWO ORPHANAGES. IN SPORTS, THE TASK GROUP COMPETED IN SOFTBALL AGAINST A LOCAL U.S. SOFTBALL TEAM, AND IN SOCCER AND BASKETBALL AGAINST ARMED FORCES OF LIBERIA TEAMS. THE LIBERIAN NATIONAL CULTURAL DANCE GROUP PERFORMED ABOARD THE USS INCHON.

6. AT THE INVITATION OF THE GOL, THE MARINE DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS, A COLOR GUARD AND A MARINE PARADE UNIT PARTICIPATED IN ARMED FORCES DAY CEREMONIES FEBRUARY 11 AND WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR DRAWING OVERFLOW CROWDS TO THIS USUALLY SPARSELY-ATTENDED EVENT. ON FEBRUARY 9, THE MARINES CONDUCTED A HELICOPTER VERTICAL ASSAULT DEMONSTRATION FOR UNITS OF THE AFL AT CAMP SCHLIEFFIN.

7. OPEN HOUSE ABOARD BOTH SHIPS BROUGHT CROWDS OF LIBERIANS AND AMERICANS, WITH THE CRUSH SO GREAT ON
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SATURDAY THAT POLICE WERE FORCED TO BRING ORDER.

8. LIBERIAN REACTION WAS UNIFMRMLY FAVOR-
ABLE TO THIS
VISIT. AN EDITRIAL, FEBRUARY 10, IN THE SEMI-OFFICIAL LIBERIAN AGE STATED: "...LIBERIA HAS RECEIVED AND CONTINUES TO RECEIVE MANY LOANS AND GRANTS FROM THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WHICH HAVE HELPED IN OUR DEVELOPMENT PROCESS,...IT IS THEREFORE OUT OF APPRECIATION OF THIS KIND OF PARTICIPATION IN OUR DEVELOPMENT GOALS THAT LEAD OUR PEOPLE TO SO WARM-HEARTEDLY WELCOME AND RECEIVE THE TWO WARSHIPS AND THEIR CREW. GUNBOATS AND WARPLANES ARE EVIDENCES OF MIGHT AND POWER, BUT WHEN ELEMENTS OF POWER ARE EXERCISED TO IMPROVE THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF OTHERS, TO ERADICATE THE COMMON ENEMIES -- IGNORANCE, DISEASE AND POVERTY -- THEN WE SEE EACH OTHER AS COMRADES IN ARMS CONCERNED WITH THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN; WE SEE EACH OTHER AS FRIENDS, AND WE SEE A MORE MEANINGFUL INTERPRETATION OF THE HANDS CLASPED ACROSS THE SEAS." END UNCLASSIFIED.

9. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: COMMENT. THE EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT CEREMONIAL VISITS SUCH AS THIS ONE BE SCHEDULED MORE FREQUENTLY, PERHAPS EVERY TWO OR THREE YEARS. THEY SERVE THE PURPOSE OF UNDERLINING THE CLOSENESS OF U.S./LIBERIAN TIES AND INTERESTS IN A SINGULARLY PERSUASIVE WAY AND RELATE DIRECTLY TO SUCH

U.S./GOL SECURITY-RELATED ACCORDS AS THE 1964
AGREEMENT (CONFIDENTIAL) GIVING THE U.S. THE RIGHT TO
ESTABLISH MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AT THE PORT OF
MONROVIA IF BOTH GOVERNMENTS AGREE THAT THIS BECOMES
"NECESSARY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL
PEACE AND SECURITY". END CONFIDENTIAL.
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